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SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ON
DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH
INSTITUTES IN AFRICA

by

Dharam Ghai

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UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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Nairobi, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to raise some issues relating to the general state and organisation of social science research on development in Africa. The main centres of social science research are the university departments, research institutes and government ministries. There is a brief discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of these centres. This is followed by a discussion of the structural arrangements and disciplinary and area specialisation of research institutes in Africa. Among the main problem areas which have engaged the attention of social scientists in recent years are rural development, education, industrialisation, regional integration, employment, migration and population. The neglected areas include international economic problems, relationship between patterns of development and distribution of economic welfare and decision-making processes in the public sector. It is further argued that the dominant methodology in development research suffers from some important weaknesses. There is then a discussion of the impact of research on policy and some proposals are made for a more effective utilisation of research findings.

Staff development is identified as the single most important need of research institutes in Africa. This leads to a discussion of the role of external research communities and agencies in strengthening African research institutes. The final section of the paper attempts to illustrate some of the general points made in the earlier discussion by reference to the rural development research conducted in recent years at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to raise some issues relating to the organisation and state of social science research on development in Africa. No attempt is made to provide a detailed description of the numerous institutes and departments engaged in this task nor of their research programmes and priorities.^{1/} I have tried instead to focus on the institutional framework for conducting research on development with particular attention to some structural aspects of social science research institutes. There is also a discussion of the main trends in research, new directions and priorities that seem appropriate at this juncture, the impact of research on policy, staffing problems and relationships with foreign scholars and agencies. In the final section of the paper the attempt is made to illustrate some of these general points by referring to the rural development research conducted in recent years at one of the African research institutes.

I. THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The main centres of social science research in Africa are the university departments, research institutes and government ministries. The great majority of the social scientists are located in the teaching departments, and hence the bulk of the research goes on there with the exception of a few countries where strong research institutes have emerged. The main function of the departments is regarded as the provision of instruction to undergraduate students. Consequently there are relatively few teaching departments which have developed strong research programmes and policies. Typically, research is assigned a minor role, is of an ad hoc nature reflecting the individual interests of staff members and therefore lacks central focus and priorities. Furthermore, only part of the research effort is concerned specifically with issues of development.

^{1/} Readers interested in this can find partial information in the following publications: Directory of Development Research and Training Institutes in Africa (Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris, 1972); C.O.D.E.S.R.I.A., Basic Information and Directory of Corresponding Social Science Institutions in Africa (Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa, Dakar, 1973); an earlier publication from the same Council, Inventory of Research Projects in African Research Institutes (1970); and International African Institute, Current Africanist Research, (1970 and 1972). In addition, there are several publications which contain information on development research in individual African countries or institutions and on specific topics such as rural development, employment, health and family planning.

In recent years, most African countries have established planning agencies, and in several of them planning units have been set up in the major operating ministries. However, they are typically short staffed and the bulk of their effort is taken up with the construction of development plans, formulation of policies, review and appraisal of major projects and coordination with other ministries. Only in exceptional cases can members of planning agencies and units engage in basic research.

Full-time centres of social science research have sprung up only in recent years. Apart from a handful of institutes such as the East African Institute of Social Research (now Makerere Institute of Social Research), the West African Institute of Social and Economic Research (currently known as the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research) and the Rhodes Livingstone Institute (now known as the Institute for African Studies) which date back to the late forties and early fifties, the great majority of the research institutes were established in the sixties. The research emphasis in the institutes created during the colonial period was primarily on anthropological and cultural studies.

The research centres established in the post-independence period display considerable diversity with respect to geographical coverage, structural arrangements, areas of research and disciplinary focus. While most research institutes have a national scope, a few centres such as the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), African Training and Research Centre in Administration and Development (CAFRAD), the Panafrican Institute for Development, and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) have research and training responsibilities covering the entire continent. In addition, there are a few regional institutions whose activities cover a number of contiguous countries. Examples of such institutions are the National Institute for Statistics and Applied Economics in Morocco and the Institute for Statistics and Applied Economics at Makerere University in Uganda, which are both largely funded by UNDP and provide training in statistics and applied economics to nationals from different regions of Africa.

There should be a natural division of labour among the continental, regional and national centres of research and training. Given the demands from government and involvement of researchers with development problems of their own countries, it is inevitable that the bulk of the resources of the national research institutes will go towards the analysis of national development problems. The regional and continental research institutions should ideally concentrate on issues which cut across the national boundaries such as migrations across national boundaries, regional integration and cooperation, trade, foreign investment, aid and multinational corporations. They should also be in a position to promote comparative studies of particular aspects of development strategies and policies either by themselves or in collaboration with national centres of research.

The supranational institutions of research and training have done some useful work in assembling data and providing general surveys on the structure, growth and development problems of African economies. They have also been active in organising training workshops and seminars on selected problems of development. But so far they have made relatively little original contribution to our understanding of the nature of African underdevelopment and of appropriate development strategies. Such institutions operate under well-known constraints, and linguistic divisions and the heritage of different colonial traditions and practices has further intensified difficulties. The result has been that in contrast to the situation in Latin America, relatively little original work has emerged from these institutions. Nor has the network of regional and continental associations linking various research and training institutes developed to a point where it is making a major contribution to the emergence of a distinctive African scholarship on national and international development problems or to the analysis and synthesis of diverse approaches and experiments being carried out in various fields of development. Nevertheless, some hopeful changes have taken place in the last few years, including the revitalisation of IDEP, the strengthening of C.O.D.E.S.R.I.A. and the emergence of new, well-organised associations like the African Association for Public Administration and Management. It is likely, therefore, that in the coming years greater progress will be made in areas where supranational institutions have a distinctive role to play.

II. STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS

As far as structural arrangements are concerned, most institutes fall within one or the other of three categories. Firstly, there are the continental and regional institutions, mostly funded by the United Nations Agencies. Continental organisations such as the ECA, C.A.F.R.A.D. and IDEP operate as independent entities within the framework of the policy guidelines laid down by their governing councils which are composed of representatives of member states. On the other hand, regional centres of training and research such as the Institutes of Statistics and Applied Economics in Uganda and Morocco may be linked with the university in the host country as in the former case or with the relevant ministry as in the latter.

The second category comprises the great majority of the research institutes in Africa which are linked with national universities. However, the pattern of their relationship displays considerable diversity. In the first place, there are several centres such as the Makerere Institute of Social Research which perform a coordinating role for social science research in the university, and their main function is to provide various research facilities for departmentally-based staff members. A similar role is played by centres which may have a small core staff of their own, such as the Human Resources Unit at the University of Lagos or the Centre for Population Studies at the University of Nairobi, but which rely heavily on teaching members with relevant research interests. At the other extreme are a few university-based institutes which interact relatively little with the social science departments. In between these extremes are centres like the Institute for Development Studies of the University of Nairobi, the Economic Research Bureau of the University of Dar es Salaam, the Institute of Development Research, Haile Selassie University, and the Bureau of Rural Development Studies at the University of Zambia, which have full-time directors and their own administrative and research staff, but which at the same time collaborate with the social science departments through teaching contributions, research support for departmental members working on development problems and organisation of seminars, workshops and conferences. Furthermore, the status of research institutes vis-a-vis the university tends to vary a good deal. While many research institutes are treated like other departments and faculties, a few like the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research have looser links with the host universities.

The third type of structural arrangement is typified by the National Institute of Planning in Cairo and the Association Algerienne Pour La Recherche Demographique, Economique et Sociale in Algeria, which are set up by the planning agencies in their respective countries. They obviously have a close relationship with the parent ministry but enjoy varying degrees of independence in the choice of research topics, recruitment of staff and other aspects of their activities.

III. DISCIPLINARY AND AREA SPECIALISATION

The general pattern in Africa is for institutes to specialise either in terms of disciplines or research areas. There are, for instance, a number of institutions concerned with research and training in public administration such as the Ecole Nationale d'Administration in Ivory Coast, the Institute of Administration at Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria and the Institute of Public Administration in Sudan. There are others, such as the Rural Development Studies Bureau in Zambia and the Institute of Development Research at the Haile Selassie University, which are concerned mainly with research on problems of rural development. New centres are springing up for research and training in population and manpower fields such as the Human Resources Unit of the University of Lagos and the Centre for Population Studies at the University of Nairobi. The Bureau of Resource Assessment and Land Use Planning at the University of Dar es Salaam is concerned primarily with questions of regional and physical planning and land uses.

Several research centres are specialised in terms of disciplines. The Economic Research Bureau of the University of Dar es Salaam, the Centre d'Etudes Economiques at the University of Tananarive and the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research are concerned largely, if not exclusively, with economic research.

It is exceptional to find centres like the Institute for Development Studies of the University of Nairobi and the Institute of National Planning in Cairo which embrace the entire gamut of socio-economic development research and a wide range of social science disciplines.

- 6 -

There is a common tendency in both developed and developing countries for development research institutes to consist predominantly of economists. This has some obvious advantages: training in economics is required for an analysis of most development problems; in a situation of scarce funds for research it makes good sense to aim for a minimum critical mass of specialists in a single discipline speaking the same "language" and working with similar tools of analysis; and concentration in one discipline also avoids many of the unnecessary clashes and misunderstandings from which multidisciplinary institutions suffer.

The weaknesses of a research institute based solely on economics are also obvious. Analysis of development problems cast exclusively in economic terms can be seriously deficient. It typically neglects such crucial issues as the values, social customs and traditions which motivate and influence people's behaviour, the role played by institutions, the administrative and bureaucratic constraints, and above all the impact of different pressure groups and economic interests in shaping socio-economic policy. Neglect of such factors not only seriously hampers an adequate understanding of a given developmental situation, but may also lead to policy prescriptions which are doomed to failure. The realisation of these problems is behind the rapid growth in Eastern Africa of multidisciplinary institutes and a problem-rather than discipline oriented approach to the study of development. The pattern in East Africa is now to involve interested specialists from a wide range of disciplines in research projects, evaluation teams, working parties, seminars and conferences. This has undoubtedly contributed to a better understanding of development problems and to more sophisticated approaches to their solution.

IV. RESEARCH ORIENTATION AND PRIORITIES

Social science research on any significant scale is of relatively recent origin in most of sub-Saharan Africa, often not going back more than ten to fifteen years. Yet during this short period, there has been a remarkable expansion in the range and volume of studies that have

- 7 -

been undertaken on the societies, politics and economics of African countries. For a variety of reasons, social science research on development has expanded at an even faster rate. Because of the numerous studies which have been carried out in scores of social science departments and research institutes in Africa, it is difficult to make any generalisations on the trends and areas of emphasis in development research. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify certain major problem areas which have engaged the attention of social scientists in recent years. Among these may be listed rural development, education, industrialisation, regional integration and in the last few years employment, migration and population.

The majority of research projects in African research institutes are concerned in one way or another with issues of rural development. This reflects the overwhelming importance of rural population and activities in most African economies. It is also a response to the shifting emphasis in favour of rural areas in the development policies of African governments. Rural development research has attracted specialists from many disciplines and has been focussed on a wide range of issues. Prominent among these have been studies on individual crops, marketing and pricing policies, land tenure, agricultural extension and credit, cooperatives and diffusion of innovations. Recently, increasing attention has been paid to non-agricultural rural activities and strategies for integrated rural development.

Education has played a critical role in the evolution of modern African societies. It has thus naturally attracted an exceptional amount of interest from scholars in a wide range of disciplines. The political scientists and sociologists have concentrated on the role of education in class and elite formation and in shaping attitudes on a broad range of socio-political issues. The educationists have been concerned with the internal workings of the educational system, including teacher training, methods of instruction, curriculum and examinations. The economists have

attempted to evaluate the costs and benefits of investment in education and its role in meeting the manpower requirements of the economy. With the massive expansion of education over the past decade, the interest has shifted to the question of employment prospects for school-leavers and to the broader issue of the role of education in socio-economic development.

In the field of industrialisation, the emphasis has been on studies of individual industries, the structure and pattern of industrial growth and strategies for industrialisation including import substitution, protection policies and export promotion. Closely related to this is the interest in regional integration. Because of the small size of most African countries and a great variety of interterritorial cooperative arrangements devised during the colonial period, regional integration has provoked a great deal of interest among economists and political scientists. Research has focussed on the mechanics, obstacles and costs and benefits of economic integration.

Migration from rural to urban areas within a country and across national borders has been a notable phenomenon of modern African development. At the same time, the problems of urban and educated unemployment have become a major political issue in many countries, and the international concern with rapid population growth has also been reflected at the national level. As a result of these factors, there has been a rapid expansion of research on the problems of employment, of rural-urban migration and rapid population growth.

Although there has been a big increase in research on development problems in the past decade or so, there are a number of important areas which have either been wholly neglected or only insufficiently explored. Perhaps the most notable instance of this is research on international economic problems. Africa is probably more deeply involved in the international economy than other parts of the Third World. Foreign trade plays an overwhelmingly important role in the structure and growth of African economies. Foreign investment and foreign ownership of assets in Africa are very extensive. Flows of capital and technical assistance are proportionately greater than in other developing regions. Yet for all that, there have been remarkably few studies on the role of foreign investment, aid and

trade in African countries. Perhaps the single most important issue in most Eastern, Central and Southern African countries in the first decade of independence has been the need for accelerated localisation of all sectors of the economy. Yet few scholars, local or foreign, have felt sufficiently interested to explore the implications of various strategies and policies for Africanisation of economies. In addition there are very few good studies on the impact of foreign investment and the role of multinational corporations.

Another area which has been generally neglected concerns the relationship between different patterns of development and the distribution of economic welfare and participation among the people. This is all the more surprising when one considers the exciting possibilities for research offered by the wide variety of approaches to development being tried out in different African countries. Although in recent years attention has shifted to the equity aspects of government policies in particular areas, few studies address themselves to the broader issue of development patterns and social and economic justice. Closely related to this is the general neglect by researchers of marginal areas and countries. Large numbers of people live in areas of low potential in semi-arid regions, often leading a nomadic life and largely by-passed by the development that has taken place in the last decade, but it is difficult to find any serious studies which deal systematically with the development possibilities in such regions.

Another area which deserves more than the scant attention it has so far received relates to decision-making processes in the public sector. A great deal of work is going on in the field of development administration, but the focus is on procedural aspects of public decision-making. Since the governments play such a vital role in social and economic development, the need is for in-depth studies of the various forces and pressures which interact to influence or determine government policies.

The preceding discussion has been concerned with development problems which have been emphasised or neglected by contemporary social science research in African universities and research centres. In concluding this section, a few remarks may be made about the desirability of certain changes in the general orientation and approach to research on development problems. In the first place there is a need to move away from partial and fragmented research to more integrative and synthesising studies which look at the society and the economy as a whole. The post independence years have been characterised by major changes in the policy of African societies. The process of modernisation is bringing about fundamental changes in social and economic structure, and a wide variety of approaches to development are being tried out in different countries. All this offers a unique opportunity to social scientists for analytical and interpretative studies of the transformation process and of the new mould in which African societies and economies are being cast. A similar phase in the history of the presently industrialised countries produced a series of classic works which succeeded in capturing the dynamic forces and delineating the shape of the emerging societies. Few if any such great works have appeared in Africa, or Asia and Latin America for that matter.

Secondly, for a realistic analysis of the nature of African development problems it is necessary to some extent to liberate oneself from methodologies and theories worked out in the context of the industrialised countries. There is a need in all social science disciplines to develop new concepts, analytical categories and models to fit the situation prevailing in developing countries. In the same way, the data and statistical systems inherited from the developed countries need to be adapted to the conditions of African economies in order to serve the objectives of development policy. All this can, however, only come about if the social scientists have an intimate understanding of the institutions, traditions and values of people in developing countries.

Finally, for the greater effectiveness of policy-oriented research it is necessary to go beyond the technical analysis of a given development problem. Special attention needs to be paid to the political and administrative feasibility of the array of policy instruments available, as well as to an analysis of the various groups and classes affected by the proposed changes. Nor can policy-oriented research fail to give consideration to the ways and means of mobilising support from the groups that stand to benefit from proposed changes and of reducing or neutralising the opposition of adversely affected vested interests.

V. IMPACT OF RESEARCH ON DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The ultimate objective of research on development is presumably to influence the development strategies and policies pursued by a country. This is true of research focussing on fundamental development problems as well as research addressed to immediate policy issues. There are many and complex reasons why the results of a good deal of research are never reflected in development policies. There is not much that can be done about some of these problems, but there are others which are simply due to shortcomings in research design or dissemination of research findings. It is these which are discussed here.

It is possible to identify the main obstacles which stand in the way of more effective utilisation of the research carried out in African universities and institutes. In many countries, the relations between the government and certain sections of the university and especially the social science departments are characterised by mutual suspicion often bordering on hostility. This naturally impedes the emergence of a close working relationship which is a prerequisite for effective use of the academic research capability. A situation of this sort prevailed in Uganda in the late sixties which effectively prevented Makerere Institute of Social Research from making any contribution to the formulation and analysis of development policy. Likewise in recent years, there have been periods of severe strain between the government and sections of the university in Ethiopia and Sudan.

On the other hand, where the research institutes and governments have been able to establish a relationship of mutual trust and confidence as in Tanzania and Kenya, the research programme has tended to focus on national development priorities and has had an impact on some key aspects of development policy.

An important factor governing the use made of research findings is the presence of receptive and trained personnel in influential positions in the government machinery. Without this, it is very difficult to initiate any dialogue on development strategy and policies let alone use the available research expertise to investigate these issues. In the governments of some African countries, the absence of a group of individuals of this sort is the main reason for the failure to harness academic expertise to the cause of development. In several countries in Eastern, Central, Southern and Francophone Africa, a good deal of development research is still carried out by expatriate researchers and transmitted to the government by expatriate advisors. This can be fairly effective over limited periods as demonstrated by the Kenyan and Tanzanian experience in the sixties, but quite clearly it cannot provide an answer to the basic problem of creating an indigenous capacity for executing and utilising research.

Even in countries with substantial national expertise in the government and the universities, difficulties are experienced in formulating policy-oriented research programmes and devising efficient means for utilising research findings in policy formulation. Too often research is not focussed sharply on policy issues and hence the findings tend to be too general to be useful to policy makers. Furthermore, the great majority of development research pays virtually no attention to the strategy for implementation of research findings, including the political and administrative aspects of various policy instruments. Finally, the implementation of research findings often requires the researcher's continuing involvement in a variety of ways, and it is only in exceptional cases that this is forthcoming.

On the government side, only a handful of top civil servants are aware of the ways in which research can contribute to better understanding and solution of the development problems of a country. A number of research institutes have made determined efforts to involve government officials in seminars, workshops and conferences, but these have been only partially successful. It is only exceptional officials who have the inclination or find time to read research papers and comment on them. The technical jargon used in these papers constitutes an additional obstacle.

In the light of these difficulties, what can be done to ensure a wider diffusion and more effective utilisation of research findings in development planning and policies? A full discussion of this important question is not possible here, but a few ideas may be mentioned.^{2/} The first requirement is for relevant and policy-oriented research along the lines already mentioned. This will in many cases call for a multidisciplinary effort with due consideration given to the institutional, political and sociological environment of a given development situation. The policy dimensions of research must receive greater attention in the design of research projects. To the greatest extent possible, an early and continuing involvement of relevant officials in research design and execution should be achieved in order to ensure a sympathetic and receptive treatment.

^{2/} The issues involved in the establishment of an efficient system for determining research priorities and for effective storage, dissemination and utilisation of research findings were discussed at two national seminars organised by the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi. The proceedings of these seminars have been published in *Harnessing Research for Production, Dissemination and Utilisation*, Occasional Paper No. 5, Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, 1972; and *In Search of a System for the Dissemination of Research Findings and Technology in Kenya*, Occasional Paper No. 7, Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, 1973.

Secondly, some means must be devised for dissemination of research findings to key policy makers in relevant and usable form. This function might be performed by "research brokers". These would be located in ministries and charged with the responsibility for coordinating with research centres. Their functions would include the formulation of research priorities as seen by the government, the monitoring of research, the distillation of key ideas and recommendations emerging from ongoing research and their presentation in a concise and clear manner to the relevant policy-makers. In addition to, or as a partial substitute for this, the research institutes might themselves entrust to one of their staff the function of bringing research findings in suitable form to the attention of policy-makers and the general public. Apart from summaries of main ideas and policy recommendations in clear, non-technical language for dissemination to relevant individuals and organisations, use could be made of mass media such as newspapers, radio, television, etc. ^{3/}

Thirdly, our experience at the Institute for Development Studies has demonstrated the enormous value of organising national workshops on themes of important policy concern which bring together scholars, policy-makers, field officers and representatives of aid agencies and mass media. This provides a unique opportunity for presenting research findings and discussing research priorities, policy issues and problems of implementation.

VI. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Perhaps the single most important problem facing African research institutes lies in the field of staffing. Since the presence of a core of well qualified and committed local scholars is a sine qua non for the viability and dynamism of a research institute in the long run, it is clear that staff development must receive the highest priority in national and international efforts to strengthen the research capabilities of African countries. In the early years of their establishment, most research institutes, especially those in Francophone, Eastern and Central African countries, were heavily dependent on

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The Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, has made a start in this direction by appointing a full time staff member to carry out these functions.

- 15 -

expatriate staff. Although a significant degree of Africanisation has taken place in recent years, most research institutes in these countries continue to suffer from a lack of senior local scholars.

A number of factors have contributed to this situation. Firstly, there is an overall scarcity of highly qualified social scientists, particularly economists. Secondly, a number of characteristics of research institutes have made it difficult for them to recruit and retain local scholars.^{4/} These include the marginal position of institutes in the university structure, lack of tenure in some institutes as compared with "instant" tenure in teaching departments, loss of freedom to pursue the research of one's choice and the pressure to publish to justify one's position as a more or less full time researcher. In addition, research institutes recruiting staff have to compete with governments and international agencies whose offers are not only more attractive financially but also confer greater power. There are of course some compensating advantages in a research appointment - more time for research, generally better access to funds, research facilities and data - but apparently these are not considered adequate to outweigh the disadvantages noted above. The result is that despite vigorous efforts at localisation of staff, most institutes have failed to build a nucleus of stable staff to provide continuity and leadership.

One of the reasons why past efforts at staff development have not come up to expectations lies in the failure to estimate needs and fashion appropriate programmes at the national level. All too often individual ministries and university departments have attempted to develop their own programmes in isolation from each other. This has resulted in much wastage and has prevented the emergence of a well thought out plan for meeting national needs for highly qualified social scientists. If the African countries are to achieve self-sufficiency in professional manpower by the end of the decade, it is essential to estimate the current shortfalls and the likely future needs of all the main users of social scientists. It is only in the light of such information that adequate training programmes can be established and the external agencies make their effective contribution.

⁴ For an excellent discussion of this problem, see James S. Coleman, "Some Thoughts on Applied Social Research and Training in African Universities," *Taamuli* (Dar es Salaam), 1973.

The needs of different countries are sufficiently diverse to call for special programmes tailored to their own requirements. In countries with large and well-established universities, the appropriate approach would be to make a big effort to initiate and strengthen their programmes of graduate studies. Such centres of excellence would in time draw students from other neighbouring countries which might not be in a position to launch graduate training of their own. External assistance is needed for both recruitment of specialist faculty members and for provision of scholarships. For countries which are not in a position to develop graduate programmes, the immediate need is for a great expansion of assistance for training overseas. In this connection, an idea worth exploring is the provision of a limited number of research "internships" with international agencies such as the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation which have established large programmes of research on development problems. The internes, who would normally have completed their graduate course work, would be attached to ongoing research projects and encouraged to engage in independent or joint research under the supervision of senior professionals. After a period of one or two years, they would be expected to return to the universities and research institutes of their countries.

VII. RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL RESEARCH COMMUNITIES AND AGENCIES

In general, African research institutes have depended much more heavily on foreign funds and staff than their counterparts in Asia and Latin America. Foreign scholars have come in three capacities: graduate students to collect material for their doctoral dissertations, faculty members on their sabbatical leaves and academics recruited by the institutes either directly or through the assistance of foundations, bilateral or multilateral agencies. There are some instances where research centres have established institutional links with universities in developed countries, such as the arrangement between the Institute for Development Studies in Kenya and the University of Glasgow or between the Institute of Development Research in Ethiopia and the Consortium of Mid-Western Universities in the United States, but these have not been adopted on any large scale.

- 17 -

The extensive expatriate presence in certain research centres in Africa has undoubtedly made some important contributions to their growth in the formative stages. It has also resulted in some very high quality research. But at the same time it has created problems of its own. Some research institutes with heavy expatriate dominance have become vulnerable to attacks from certain quarters and especially from their academic colleagues in other parts of the universities. The overwhelming expatriate influence in some research institutes has also had the unintentional effect of stifling local initiative. Finally, the presence of large numbers of foreign researchers, whether attached to the university or operating on their own, has led in many countries to the introduction or tightening of regulations concerning the procedures for obtaining research clearance.

The leadership of most research institutes has passed into local hands, and the proportion of local staff has increased considerably. Nevertheless, for some years to come, there will continue to be opportunities for constructive contributions by expatriate scholars. However, if their potential contribution to research and institution building is to be fully exploited, a much more selective approach to the recruitment and utilisation of expatriate skills will be necessary than has prevailed so far. This will call for changes on the part of expatriate researchers as well as the host institutions.

There are few research institutes which have developed policies for optimal use of expatriate skills. Consequently, there is considerable waste and frustration on all sides. It is not possible here to go into the full details of the ways in which expatriate contributions to the host country and institute could be maximised, but a few general points may be mentioned. First, the host institute must have a clear idea of the research needs and priorities of the country. These should be determined periodically through an appropriate mechanism after discussions and consultation among the interested individuals and organisations. An indicative research plan of this nature should contain an inventory of completed research, listing of ongoing research and assessment of needs and priorities. A document of this nature will prove extremely valuable not only to new expatriate scholars looking around for useful

research topics, but also for the growing number of local graduate students about to launch on their first research. At the same time, by identifying the existing gaps in knowledge it can contribute to a more efficient recruitment and utilisation of expatriate skills.

Secondly, given the overriding importance of staff development for African research institutes and universities, this should be considered an essential part of the assignment of senior expatriate scholars. There are several ways in which this may be done such as informal instruction to research assistants, supervision of the research work of junior members of staff, joint research projects and faculty seminars on recent developments in the area of their specialisation.

Thirdly, in order to derive full benefit from the research undertaken by expatriate scholars, the host institution should ensure that preliminary results of their research are discussed with the relevant people prior to their departure, that copies of data and other research material are deposited in the local libraries and the finished product made available to all interested parties. In almost all African countries, there are numerous other opportunities for expatriate researchers to act as advisors and consultants to ministries and private organisations.

Over and above this, there are many other ways senior and experienced scholars can contribute to institution building in the host country. These include involvement in the ongoing activities of the institute, development of new programmes, publications in local journals and so on. Expatriates with such ideas and attitudes will be needed and welcomed for many years to come. They will find their stay in the country a stimulating and enriching experience and will be able to contribute a vital element to the development process. In contrast, those expatriates whose sole motive in going to developing countries is professional and financial profit, who come merely to collect material for the books they write on returning to their home universities, will encounter an increasingly hostile atmosphere and leave behind them a legacy of bitterness.

A final point should be made concerning the role of multilateral and bilateral agencies in institution building and the strengthening of research capability in African countries. There was a time when such agencies automatically looked to scholars and institutions in industrialised countries for development research. Consequently large resources were given out to help their research and institution building. In recent years there has been a definite change of attitude in this respect, and many donor agencies are beginning to develop programmes of various types of support for research institutes in developing countries. The Rockefeller Foundation has played a critical role in staff development and institution building in social sciences in East African countries. The Canadian International Research Development Centre has resolutely pursued a policy of channelling most of its resources to research in universities and institutes in developing countries. Nevertheless, the fact remains that even today the instinctive reaction of most foundations and bilateral and international agencies is to look to experts and institutions in developed countries for consultancies, research contracts and advice. Apart from the fact that this hinders the development of research capability in developing countries, it is questionable, to say the least, whether aid funds should be used to strengthen the capacity in industrialised countries for solving development problems.

It is recognised that many developing countries have limited research capacity, and therefore for some years to come it will be necessary in certain fields to rely on the skills and expertise available in industrialised countries. The building up of indigenous capacity to identify, analyse and solve development problems is a long and arduous task, but without it no genuine development can take place. Donor agencies can play an important part in this by greatly increasing their support for research, training and institution building programmes.

VIII. RURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY

The preceding discussion has necessarily been somewhat general and sketchy. Some of the issues raised above may be illustrated by a study of the rural development research conducted in recent years in Kenya under the auspices of the Institute for Development Studies. The Institute has devoted the bulk of its resources over the past six to seven years to research on rural development problems. In this effort it has worked closely with social scientists from the teaching departments and with officials in various ministries in the Kenya Government. From the outset, expatriate scholars and external aid agencies have also been closely involved in the development of this programme. A study of this experience can therefore throw some light on most of the issues raised in a general way in the earlier sections.

Research on rural development has ranged over a wide field and has developed in response both to immediate policy issues and to an evolving consensus on new problems and new approaches. It was initiated by a group of economists but soon widened its scope to embrace a multidisciplinary team with specialists in extension, communications, development administration, education and rural sociology. From the outset the research has been sharply focussed on real issues and problems in rural development. The major areas covered over a period of six years have been pricing and marketing policies, institutions, rural planning, strategies for integrated rural development, policies for equitable distribution of incomes and services and evaluation of ongoing programmes, policies and projects.

The initial research studies were focussed on marketing and pricing policies. This was in response to the government's need to simplify and rationalise the extremely complicated system of marketing boards and price fixing for most of the important crops grown in Kenya. The Institute staff carried out a series of studies on the pricing and marketing policies for beef, cereals, fruit and vegetables, dairy products, coffee and cotton. In addition there were studies on agricultural inputs such as fertilisers and agricultural fuel and machinery, as well as on the evolution of the marketing board system.

The second major area covered relates to institutions. Here studies have been carried out on such diverse subjects as cooperatives, changing systems of land tenure, local leadership, village polytechnics and self-help efforts in rural development.

In the latter part of the sixties, as a consequence in part of an international conference held at Kericho in Kenya on education, employment and rural development, both the research and policy interest began to shift towards the need for integrated strategies for balanced rural development. The Institute staff carried out a number of studies relating to this broader conception of rural development. These included studies of the administrative and political structures for integrated rural development including the relation between central and local authorities; decentralised, area-based planning; elements of a programme of intensified rural development, including government policies in research, credit and extension and the search for innovations in agricultural practises; possibilities for rural industries; local participation in development and decision-making; and preparation of a control and reporting system for the implementation of rural development programmes.

The fourth area of research concerns equitable rural development. Here a number of studies were initiated on patterns of income and wealth distribution in selected areas, the growth and diversification of employment opportunities in the rural areas and development possibilities in marginal drought-prone areas. In addition, pilot programmes were set up to test the effectiveness of new methods for delivering credit and extension services.

Finally, a number of studies have been concerned specifically with the evaluation of ongoing programmes and policies. These have usually been conducted by multidisciplinary teams at the request of government ministries. Apart from the evaluation of specific projects such as the cotton blocks scheme in Mbere, the functional literacy scheme, school feeding scheme and artificial insemination programme, a fifteen-member multidisciplinary team from the University carried out a major evaluation of the entire Special Rural Development Programme as it had evolved up to the end of 1972.

In the execution of its research on rural development problems, the Institute drew heavily upon the expertise available in the teaching departments. Without this collaboration it would not have been possible for the Institute members on their own to undertake all these activities. At the same time right from the outset a close working relationship had been established with the Government, and in particular with the Ministries of Finance and Planning and Agriculture. The Kericho conference which gave much of the stimulus to subsequent research on rural development had been planned jointly by the University and the Government. University members were closely involved in a series of further studies and activities which finally culminated in the adoption of the Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP). In the initial stages of SRDP, a number of the Institute staff were based in the field as area evaluators. Subsequently, the evaluation work was carried out by centrally based staff. At the same time a series of research papers on various aspects of integrated rural development have had an impact on the evolution of SRDP.

The Institute staff has contributed to the government's efforts in the field of rural development in several other ways. First, they have served on a number of working parties set up by the government such as the ones on agricultural inputs and extension services. They have also served as consultants to a variety of parliamentary commissions. Institute expertise has been utilised in several seminars and training courses for field staff. Most recently, a University team prepared a Manual for District Level Planning in Kenya at Government request.

In general, a close and growing relationship with the Government has been established. There have been periods of strain, such as when the Institute and some Government members have not seen eye to eye on the precise role that University members should play in the evaluation of SRDP or when University members have been asked to carry out assignments which should properly be the responsibility of Government officials.

Expatriate scholars and external agencies have played an important role, especially in the initial stages, in the development of the Institute's programme of research and training in rural development. The series of studies on pricing and marketing policies were carried out by members recruited under the Glasgow Scheme which was worked out jointly by the Ministry of Finance and Planning, the University of Nairobi, the Overseas

Development Administration in Britain and Glasgow University. In the earlier phase, the multi-disciplinary team recruited for research and evaluation of the SRDP consisted predominantly of expatriates and was financed for the most part by the Rockefeller Foundation. More recently, the Swedish International Development Agency has made a grant to the Institute to enable it to continue its work on rural development problems in general and the SRDP in particular.

While foreign scholars and agencies have played a catalytic and innovative role in the Institute's programme of research on rural development, the expatriate dominance in the early phases gave rise to a number of problems. In particular the personal relationships between some expatriates and Kenyans were not all that might be desired. There were also differences of opinion on the role of the Institute in the SRDP as well as priority areas of research. Many of these problems were overcome as the leadership of the project passed into Kenyan hands and new procedures and structures were devised for development of the programme and for liaison with the government. The expatriate contribution nevertheless continued to be quite substantial.

IX. CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to raise a number of issues concerning the problems and growth of social science research institutes in Africa. Building up an indigenous capacity to identify, analyse and solve problems is an essential element of overall development. This purpose can best be served by a full-time research institute which will draw upon all the available talent in a country for its research and training activities. In view of the complexity of the development process, it is important that a research institute should have a multidisciplinary focus.

Staff development continues to be the most important challenge to the emerging research institutes in Africa. The role of external funds and expatriate scholars was critical in the early phases of the growth of the African research institutes, but in the next phase a much more selective approach to the recruitment and utilisation of expatriate skills will be necessary.